

BSLMP

for RAC - Lib
18 Nov 88

Bureau of School Library Media Programs

Between 13 September and 24 October 1988, nine regional hearings were held on the proposed changes to existing Commissioner's Regulations 91.1 and 91.2. A typical hearing was attended by about 60 people with about 7 people signed up in advance to speak. We generally had 17-20 actually testifying at each site. There was usually one speaker against them, a representative of the local school superintendent's association using a prepared statement based on the outline which appeared in the state association of school superintendent's newsletter. At two hearings we had two speak against the proposed regulations and only at one was there as many as four against them. All the rest of the speakers were in favor of them. However, they did have some questions and suggestions to clarify language. There also is a standard resolution circulating among school boards for them to vote against the proposed changes. So far we have received six of these.

On 27 October I was invited to address the Advisory Committee of School Superintendents. There were about 31 present - representing BOCES, city, urban, and rural districts. They were all opposed. At the hearings Patricia Webster gave a 10 minute overview in which she outlined the need for revision, the recommendations in 1981 of the Commissioner's Committee on Libraries, the makeup of our current advisory committee, some of the research upon which the proposals are based, and the fact that we are requesting additional categorical State aid over a five year implementation phase-in that would cover the total costs to initially hire all of the staff needed, both professional and support, as well as the additional library resources needed.

The superintendent presenting the regional statement usually prefaced his remarks with one such as "if I had heard previously what I just heard from Ms. Webster, I might have had a different statement, but this is the one I have been charged to present."

At every hearing, everyone who wanted to speak had the opportunity to do so, even if it meant that the hearings went a little past the scheduled time. All hearings were scheduled for 4:00-5:30 p.m.

The Advisory Committee also met in Albany on 27 October. They heard a summary of all testimony and letters received. One thing we heard repeatedly was concern over very small schools being able to meet the regulations which could result in less services than now being provided. The Committee decided to recommend that in 91.3 another category be put in for schools below 125 enrollment with the requirement for 1/2 library media specialist and 1/2 support person. The present proposal had been

for a full-time library media specialist and no support for 0-250 enrollment.

They also decided to recommend a lower title requirement in 91.2 for the same schools, but left the actual number to be decided by the Bureau of School Library Media Programs.

We will now take the committee's recommendation, the letters and testimony and prepare a final version which will be submitted for internal approval about the middle of November and has to go to the Secretary of State for publication about the first of December. The proposed regulations are scheduled to go to the Regents for action at their February 1989 meeting.

On 28 September Susan Shuman resigned to take a supervisory position in Arizona where she has family. We are hoping to get permission to fill this vacancy. One problem is that the list for this position has expired so an appointment would be a temporary one until a test is given and then the person would have to be in the top three to retain the position. With the financial uncertainty that exists, candidates have decided to withdraw their applications. We will continue our efforts to get at least a replacement, but even with a replacement we are still understaffed.